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North Carolina's electric cooperatives provide reliable, safe and affordable electric service to 850,000 homes, farms and businesses in North Carolina. The 27 electric cooperatives are each member-owned, not-for-profit and overseen by a board of directors elected by the membership.

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YOUR ADDRESS CHANGED?

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In the 1920s she went to Philadelphia to study art. Then she came back to Ashe County to raise a family and paint.



He was an Oklahoma farm boy turned American GI. Learn more about Rhuben Raymond Frank and others through the stories of their grandchildren. See page 10.

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On the Cover

Detail from "Miss Eleanor's Flock," a watercolor painted in the 1980s by Florence Thomas of Ashe County. Reproduced with permission of McFarland & Company, publisher of "The Art of Florence Thomas." See page 16.

Why we reach out to you



By Renee Whitener

If you're reading Carolina Country, you're likely to be a member of an electric cooperative. If you're a member of an electric cooperative, you own your cooperative along with the other members.

Perhaps the most important question is: Are you aware of the special benefits and advantages you have as a member of a cooperative?

Recent research by Touchstone Energy, the national network of over 600 local electric cooperatives, shows that when you realize you're more than just a customer, that's meaningful to you. The research also indicates that when you identify with cooperative membership so well that you refer to yourselves as members, you report the greatest level of consumer satisfaction.

The principles that guide electric cooperatives call for us to educate, train and inform our members about the cooperative way of doing business so that you can contribute effectively to your cooperative's development. Cooperatives use a variety of ways to educate, train and inform members about the cooperative difference.

The cooperative difference includes having member-elected directors who are members themselves and serve as the trustees of the members' business.

The cooperative difference is also a commitment to provide highly reliable electric service. That means we invest in the latest technology to ensure reliability and provide you with the highest level of customer service.

Another key difference is our capital credits system. Cooperatives are not-for-profit and exist solely to serve consumers with reliable, affordable electricity—not to earn a profit. Through the capital credits system, cooperatives refund to you any additional funds left-over after all operational expenses are covered.

As local, private businesses owned by those we serve, cooperatives have a higher degree of care and concern for our local communities. Supporting education, health care, economic development and other areas that contribute to quality of life is an important mission of every cooperative.

And the list goes on. Reaching consumers of various ages and backgrounds to educate, inform and train is a challenge in today's environment of information overload. Reaching younger consumers is an even greater challenge. This is why cooperatives use a variety of communication tools.

Newsletters are one way we reach out to consumers and the research shows most of you read them. Whether your member newsletter comes with your monthly power bill or is delivered as part of Carolina Country, the objective is the same: to keep you informed of the business of your cooperative.

The principles that guide electric cooperatives call for us to educate, train and inform our members so that you can contribute effectively to your cooperative's development

Many cooperatives have established member advisory committees (MACs) as a way of maintaining regular, organized contact with our membership. Our MACs are the "eyes and ears" of the cooperative, providing valuable feedback as well as helping the cooperative get out important messages to other members.

Cooperatives also use Web sites. Many cooperatives offer the ability to sign up for services, give feedback and ask questions online. Blue Ridge Electric and other cooperatives also offer the option of paying your bill online. Pay-on-line is particularly popular with the students we serve at Appalachian State University. And many students and teachers are utilizing the safety tips provided on our Web site for instructional purposes—both at home and at school.

Cooperatives are also reaching younger consumers through programs such as Bright Ideas, a school grant program that North Carolina cooperatives fund. The national Rural Electric Youth Tour also provides students the opportunity to

travel to Washington, D.C., where they learn about how government works and also about the cooperative form of business. And at Blue Ridge Electric, we annually award several area high school juniors with scholarships to the acclaimed Broyhill Leadership Camp to further demonstrate

our commitment to local communities.

Some people ask why cooperatives make such efforts to communicate with our consumers when we "don't have to." They reason that electric utilities operate in a regulated industry where our consumers are assigned to us. The answer is quite simple. Cooperatives are different from other businesses because we're owned by the consumers we serve. Instead of answering to stockholders in some faraway city, cooperatives are accountable to who we often call our "stakeholders." These are our members: the individuals, businesses and industries living in the communities served by each local cooperative.

And while Touchstone Energy's research reveals that consumer satisfaction scores for electric cooperatives exceed utility industry averages, cooperatives understand their responsibility to continue communicating with our members. That's why you'll continue to hear from us in Carolina Country, in your member newsletters, on our Web sites, and through many other programs and avenues to reach you.

Renee Whitener is director of corporate communications for Blue Ridge Electric, a 67,000-member Touchstone Energy cooperative serving Alexander, Alleghany, Ashe, Caldwell, Watauga and Wilkes counties.

Mission accomplished

I just want to let everybody know when I wrote the letter to Carolina Country in 2002 and said I was reading my Bible, I now finished reading my Bible June 26 of 2004 on a Saturday. It took me at least 3 or 4 years to finish. A lot of names and words in it I did not know, but I take my Bible to church with me so I can learn those names and words. Even in the church the people that go don't even know the words and names, so we all try to learn them.

I want to let the people know all over everywhere that they are all important.

Onie Frances Rogerson
466 Brooks Lane
Blounts Creek, NC 27814



Thanks from Tri-County EMC

Tri-County EMC employees would like to say a special thanks to all who have ordered our 60th Anniversary Cookbook over the past three years. The cookbook, a three-ring binder including 525 recipes, was published in 2000 for our 60th anniversary. All proceeds from the sale of the cookbook are used for scholarships for high school seniors in our area. Since 2000, employees have sold over 9,800 books with only a few copies remaining to be sold. In four years, we have awarded scholarships valuing \$45,250 to 102 deserving high school seniors. Thanks for your support, as we continue with our commitment to community projects.

J. Michael Davis, General Manager
Tri-County EMC
Dudley

Editor's Note: Less than 200 books are available at \$12 (includes shipping and handling). Orders can be placed through Tri-County Electric, P.O. Box 130, Dudley, NC 28333.

What is a horse egg?

In November's Carolina Country, we relayed a question that a reader posed after seeing the term "horse egg" in our series "You Know You're From North Carolina If..."

We learned what it is from these readers:

My dad ever since I can remember calls big rocks "mare eggs." So since a mare is a female horse, maybe that is what they are talking about.

Tommy McNeilly

Some old men were sitting on the porch of an old store when the owner showed them a coconut. Discussion began and finally one man said, "I know what it is. It's a mule egg!"

C.M. "Buddy" Todd, Stony Point

In Carteret County it refers to a swollen area or knot on the body. For example, "I have a mosquito bite as big as a horse egg." I guess it originated from when a horse kicked you, and there was a swollen place or knot.

Barry Arthur

In 1966, my then-4-year-old daughter, eyes big with anticipation, asked me how big is a horse's egg? We were chatting at the kitchen sink while I made lunch.

Irene P. Johnson

Horse eggs or mule eggs are terms I learned years ago for watermelons.

Terry Weatherford, Charlotte

I did a Google search and this is what I came up with: 1) a brightly colored egg cup in the shape of a horse, 2) horse bots, a parasite that infects horses, 3) a Romanian folk story.

Rose Hardy, Newport

This Yankee transplant may be way off, but I think a horse egg is a jointed-in-the-middle bit with two egg-shaped rings for the reins.

Doug Bearce, Macon

Some of us refer to the watermelon as a horse egg.

Leo Gravely, Mt. Airy

A cow pie is to cows as a horse egg is to horses.

Jerry Taylor, Huntersville



My husband recalls that a neighbor, Baxter Long, one day remarked, "Well, I better go down and see if I can find any horse eggs." He went behind the barn to the pumpkin patch at the edge of a cornfield. The pumpkins he called horse eggs.

Rachel Tucker Helms, Monroe

It starts out with horsing around. Hitting someone with your knuckles on an area of the upper arm or top of forearm causes a knot to jump up. It's called a horse egg. Also called a goose egg. I am sure most people know what a crow egg is, don't they?

Charles P. Randolph, Marion

When I was a little boy and stopped by my grandparents house, my grandmother occasionally would be preparing one of her favorite dessert pies or cakes. If the process called for fresh coconut, she would purchase a whole coconut. To a youngster, this was a strange looking thing. Brown, fuzzy, egg-shaped, and not like anything I had seen before. It did look like an egg, except strange. My grandfather, Emmett A. Williams, being the great jokester, would laugh at my curiosity and exclaim, "Son, that's a horse egg!"

Dwight S. Williams Jr., Upper Sampson County

There is a popular egg with a picture of a horse drinking water on it.

Harry and Gay

That is what a horse leaves in the road. Some people here call it a "horse biscuit."

S. Hyatt, Polkton

These balls are sometimes called "horse apples" or "horse eggs."

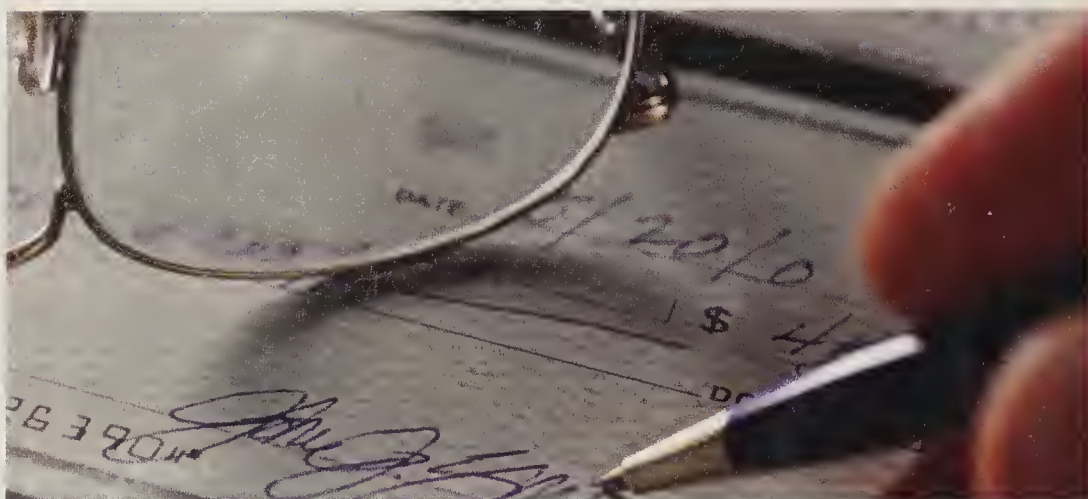
Marc Moore, Sanford

The term refers to horse and pony poop, which is firm and rounded, like an egg, and usually found in piles. Guess us NCSU grads are good for something after all, huh?

Jenny Knight

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New banking law will clear your checks sooner

Checks you write today probably will clear sooner because of a new federal banking law, known as Check 21, that became effective on Oct. 28. Consumers are advised to have sufficient funds in their checking accounts when writing checks.

Here is some basic information about Check 21 issued by the Federal Reserve Board. For more information, contact your bank or visit www.federalreserve.gov.

What is Check 21 and what is its basic purpose?

Check 21 allows banks to handle more checks electronically, which should make check processing faster and more efficient. Today, banks often physically move original paper checks from the bank where the checks are deposited to the bank that pays them. Check 21 permits banks to discontinue transporting the paper checks.

How does Check 21 work?

Banks can capture a picture of the front and back of a check along with the associated payment information and transmit this information electronically. If you or your bank require a paper check, the bank can use the electronic picture and payment information to create a paper "substitute check."

Will my checks be processed faster because of Check 21?

Yes. In recent years, the speed of check-processing has increased because of other system improvements as well.

When you write a check, make sure your checking account has enough money in it to cover the check.

Is electronic check processing secure?

Electronic check processing is not new to the financial industry and is a safe and reliable way of processing payments. It uses technology that has been developed and tested to process your check information securely.

Can I still get my canceled checks back in my account statements?

Yes. If you get your canceled checks back with your account statements today, you will continue to receive canceled checks unless your bank notifies you otherwise. The only difference will be that some of the canceled checks that you receive may be substitute checks. You can use a substitute check the same way you would use an original check, such as for record-keeping and proof-of-payment purposes.

What is a substitute check?


A substitute check is a paper copy of the front and back of the original check. A substitute check is slightly larger than a standard personal check so that it can contain a picture of your original check. It must be printed in accordance with very specific standards so that it can be used in the same way as the original check. If you receive a substitute check that appears to have a problem, such as it contains a bad picture of your original check, contact your bank.


Does Check 21 offer consumer protection?


Yes. Previous banking law protects you against erroneous and unauthorized check payments. Check 21 contains new protections for consumers. For example, a new refund procedure (called "expedited recredit") is available for a consumer who suffers a loss related to a substitute check he or she received.


Hang outdoor lights safely


Here are some outdoor light tips from Underwriters Laboratories, the independent, not-for-profit testing and certification organization.

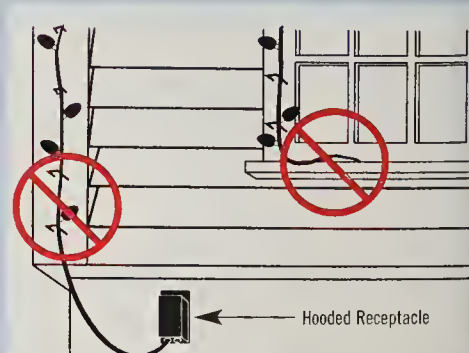
 Before using any outdoor light strings, make sure they have the UL label and the phrase "for indoor use and outdoor use." It means they have been tested under damp conditions and in extreme temperatures.

 Don't staple or nail through light strings or electrical cords. Damaging the wire or insulation could lead to serious electric shock or fire.

 Don't close doors or windows on extension cords. Damaging the wire or insulation could lead to serious electric shock or fire.

 Don't allow extension cords, even those labeled "for outdoor use," to run through water.

 If you'll be climbing a ladder near electrical sources, choose a non-metallic ladder. Never lean ladders against or near power lines or the electrical lines entering a home or other building.





Mitchell L. Keel



S. Franklin Williams

Four County EMC has a new CEO and board president

The board of directors at Four County Electric Membership Corporation in Burgaw selected Mitchell L. Keel to succeed Edward E. Brown Jr. as the co-op's CEO. Ed Brown had served in the co-op's top management post since 1986 and retired at the end of October after a 37-year career with electric cooperatives.

Keel is a Martin County native, as is his wife, Cindy. Their three children, ages 13, 17 and 18, all were born in North Carolina, too.

In 1994, the Keels moved to Missouri when Keel became CEO of Lewis County Rural Electric Cooperative. Lewis County REC serves some 7,000 members in the northeastern-most part of Missouri along the Iowa and Illinois borders. In 1937, it was the first co-op in Missouri to energize a power system built with a U.S. Rural Electrification Administration loan. Prior to moving to Missouri Keel worked with North Carolina's municipal electric systems. He was electric engineering coordinator for Greenville utilities for four years, director of utilities and public works at Ayden for two years, and electric system manager for Kinston from 1989 to 1994.

An electrical engineering graduate of N.C. State University, he also holds a business management degree from Mount Olive College.

Keel said he and his family are pleased to be back in North Carolina and working with the cooperative network. "Four County has an excellent Board with good leadership," he said. "I am proud to become a part of such a fine organization and hope to follow and continue along with its success."

During its annual election of officers, Four County EMC's board chose S. Franklin Williams of Wallace as president. W.A. Settlemeyer of Riegelwood was re-elected vice president, and Bertice Lanier of Maple Hill was elected as secretary-treasurer.

Williams had been secretary-treasurer of the board. He succeeds R.W. "Buck" Blanchard of Turkey, longtime president of the board, who remains a director.

Four County EMC serves more than 30,300 members in Bladen, Columbus, Duplin, Pender, Onslow and Sampson counties. Four County EMC has 98 employees and maintains about 5,765 miles of power lines.

Bright Ideas program sets new records in cash grants to teachers



The Bright Ideas education grant program sponsored by North Carolina's Touchstone Energy Cooperatives has set two major records.

In November, the program awarded \$530,000 in grants to North Carolina classroom teachers, the largest single year of disbursement in the program's 11 years. Since its inception, Bright Ideas has awarded more than \$4 million in grant monies to the state's educators.

**BRIGHT
IDEAS**

A new application record has been set as well. More than 1,700 classroom teachers submitted applications this year, the most in the program's history.

Since 1994, the Bright Ideas grant program has strived to improve education in North Carolina by financing classroom-based projects that may not otherwise be funded.

In recognition of the hard work of teachers and the extra effort invested by applying for a Bright Ideas grant, Gov. Michael F. Easley proclaimed November Bright Ideas Month. During Bright Ideas Month, the achievements of grant winners across the state were recognized at special award luncheons in Charlotte, Raleigh and Greenville. Other Bright Ideas events during the month included local luncheons and dinners, surprise check presentations and a special school assembly award presentation by team members of the Carolina Panthers.

As a demonstration of appreciation for creative and dedicated teachers, 30 Bright Ideas winners will be honored during an on-court halftime recognition program at the North Carolina State/Manhattan University Jaspers men's basketball program on Dec. 5.

Light Lines

by DonnaRee



"I never knew electricity came in so many colors."

Change Lives

Touchstone Energy cooperative members help neighbors in need by rounding up their electric bill payments.

By Suzanne Shoaf Ward



Carteret-Craven Electric Cooperative's Operation Round Up program helped fund a Morehead City summer camp that encouraged Hispanic children to continue practicing their English language skills while school was out. Students Daniel Lopez and Jessica Geronimo hold a flounder fish print they made during the program. Showing the cash that helped are Carteret County Schools' Andrea McLean (left) and Susan Drake of the Morehead City Parks & Recreation Dept.

When she paid her electric bill each month, Hope Harrelson of Bladen County didn't think twice about the extra pennies she would pay to round up her payment to the nearest dollar. She figured it was an easy way to help those less fortunate, which is what Four County EMC's Operation Round Up™ program does.

In February 2003, however, her perspective on Operation Round Up changed. Hope's husband contracted pneumonia, forcing him to stay home from work for months. Because of his severe condition, she stayed by her husband's side for more than a month to care for him and to watch after their two small children. That August, both were jobless.

"It was a desperate time," Hope said.

The gas bill was due. Hope's car insurance needed to be paid. There were medicines that her husband needed that they could not afford. Four County EMC's Operation Round Up funds came to the rescue, and she was able to pay for all these expenses and more.

Since then, Hope said, not a month goes by when she doesn't think about what a few extra cents can do for one family.

Because of the more than 20,700 Four County EMC members that are rounding up their electric bills to the nearest dollar (out of the 30,416 total members), families like the Harrelsons can get back on their feet again. The average customer pays 50 cents a month. A little more than \$10,000 a month is generated from all participating members. The money is put into a trust fund known as Operation Round Up.

Currently in North Carolina, 16 of the 27 Touchstone Energy cooperatives across the state participate in the program. (See page 9.) Four County EMC, headquartered in Burgaw, this year reached the \$1 million mark for its Operation Round Up program. Carteret-Craven Electric Cooperative, Morehead City, also met the \$1 million mark in July.

HOW IT WORKS

Members of participating cooperatives take part by "rounding up" their electric bills to the next whole dollar each month. For example, if an

electric bill is \$64.76, a participating member would be billed \$65 and the difference of \$0.24 would be placed into an Operation Round Up trust fund.

The money rounded up is used to provide assistance to either cooperative members in crisis situations or non-profit organizations serving members. Every participating cooperative sets up its own giving parameters, governs the program differently and even sometimes calls it by a name other than Operation Round Up. There is an application for members and organizations to fill out, but again done differently at each co-op.

Central EMC, Sanford, recently began the program called MembersCare, and Randolph EMC, Asheboro, has offered its People Helping People program for about a year. (Both Central EMC and Randolph EMC members can sign up in the newsletter published in the center pages of this issue of Carolina Country.) Pee Dee Electric, Wadesboro, begins its Care to Share program in January (Pee Dee members see center pages).

No matter how the co-op chooses to administer the program, the results are the same. People and organizations across the state are getting much needed help.

Operation Round Up programs across the state are optional; if a member does not want to participate, the co-op will take the member off the program's list.

"I encourage all co-op members to round up because you never know when you will need that money. I never thought my family and I would," said Hope Harrelson.

The voluntary program's slogan, "Small change that changes lives," refers to the fact that members typically contribute only about \$6 per year through rounding up their electric bill.

"The program makes you realize there are people out there who need help," said James T. Heckstall, president of the Roanoke Electric Care Trust program. "We're so grateful that our members have been generous enough to help raise these funds that have made a difference in so many organizations and families' lives."

Lisa Galizia



Eldo Jones (left) and neighbor John Burton outside Ms. Jones' new home in the Jones County community of Stella. Friends, neighbors, area churches and members of Carteret-Craven Electric Cooperative's Operation Round Up program came together to help Ms. Jones and her family this summer after their mobile home was burned. A grant from the cooperative's foundation board put the member donations over the \$1 million mark.

A NATIONAL PROGRAM

Four County EMC and other participating North Carolina co-ops "borrowed" the idea from a South Carolina electric cooperative. Palmetto Electric Cooperative in Hilton Head started the program locally in December 1989. More than 15 years later, approximately 200 electric cooperatives in 32 states across the country have similar programs.

"It is our hope that Operation Round Up will continue to expand among the over 900 electric cooperatives throughout the United States," said Tom Upshaw, executive vice president and general manager of Palmetto Electric.

The positive impact on the program has been tremendous. Operation Round Up, literally made up of pennies from monthly electric bills, has raised more than \$41 million across the nation since the program's inception.

Currently, more than \$9 million is being donated annually by electric cooperatives from around the country.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Carteret-Craven Electric Cooperative also has a very active Operation Round Up program. More than 30,300 of its 34,829 members contribute to the fund, making it possible for people like Dr. Jerry Batten to create positive change in the Carteret County community.

Dr. Batten's "Miles for Smiles" dental program from the Carteret County Health Department received funding from Operation Round Up. This funding brought a mobile dental unit to local elementary schools for low-income children whose families could not afford routine dental check-ups.

"We used the Operation Round Up funds to buy new equipment, enhancements and educational materials for the already existing program to make it more child friendly," said Dr. Batten. "The program has expanded and improved tremendously since we started receiving Operation Round Up funds."

With the funds, "Miles for Smiles" purchased a microabrasion drill, which is not as scary and more patient-friendly than a normal dental drill, Dr. Batten said. "This new purchase allows us to be one step closer to painless dentistry. Our overall goal is for 'Miles for Smiles' to be a positive dental experience for students."

The educational tools and video also purchased with Round Up money have brought a new element to "Miles for Smiles." Classes come to the dental unit as a mini-field trip to learn more about dentistry and the importance of taking good care of your teeth. A whole school can benefit from the mobile dental unit being on campus.

"I didn't know Carteret-Craven Electric co-op had a community program such as Operation Round Up until a few years ago," Dr. Batten said. "We are so grateful for it and all the good it does in our community."

For more information on the Operation Round Up program, contact your local electric cooperative.

Suzanne Shoaf Ward is the community relations specialist with the North Carolina Association of Electric Cooperatives.

Bobbie Joe Lindsay



The Garysburg Volunteer Fire Dept. bought pagers and handheld radios thanks to Roanoke Electric Cooperative's Electric Care Trust program.



Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives of North Carolina The power of human connections®

The North Carolina Touchstone Energy cooperatives that participate in Operation Round Up and similar programs are:

Albemarle EMC

Blue Ridge Electric

Cape Hatteras Electric Cooperative

Carteret-Craven Electric Cooperative

Central EMC

EnergyUnited

Four County EMC

Lumbee River EMC

Pee Dee EMC

Piedmont EMC

Randolph EMC

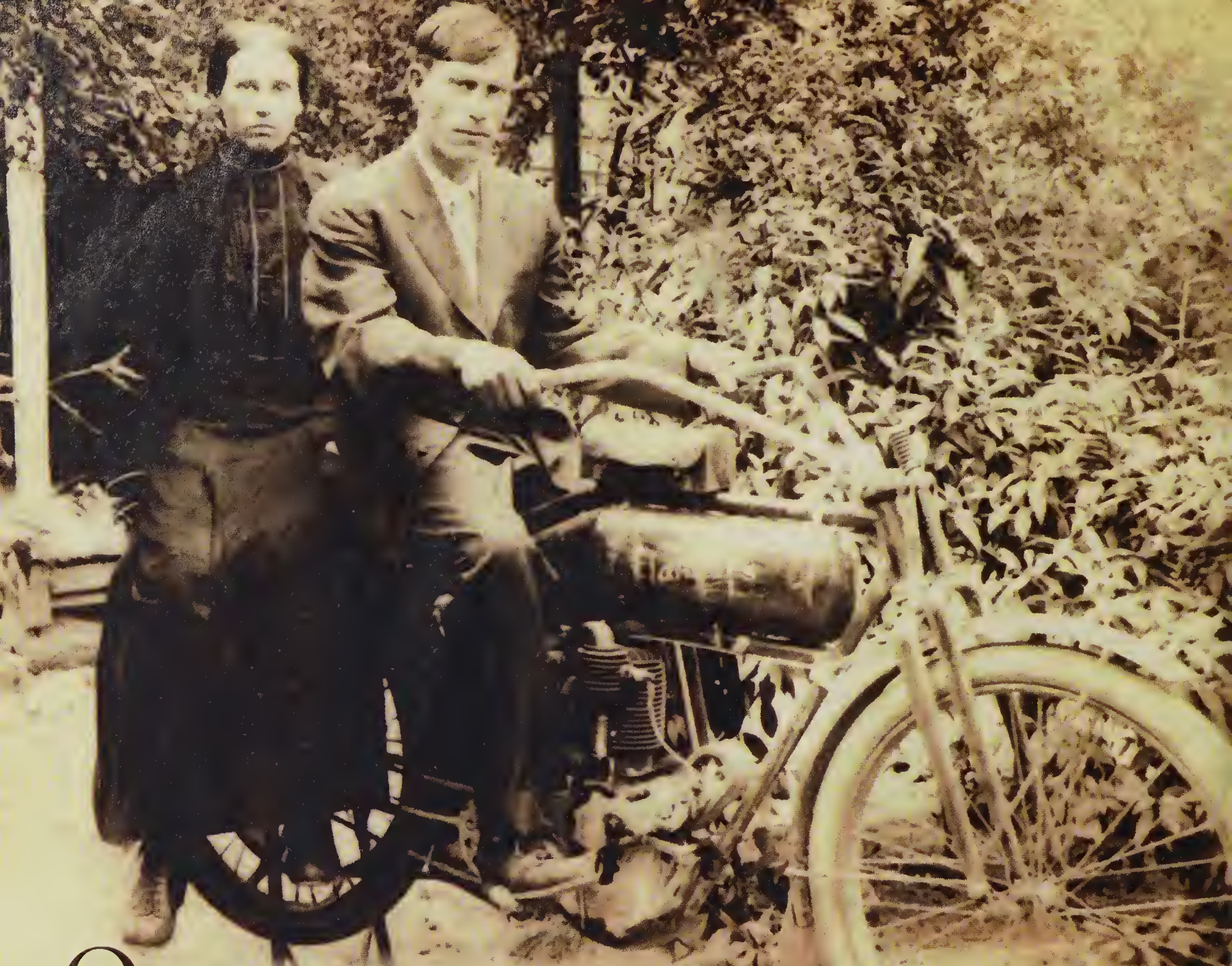
Roanoke Electric Cooperative

Surry-Yadkin EMC

Tideland EMC

Tri-County EMC

Wake EMC



Over the river and through the woods

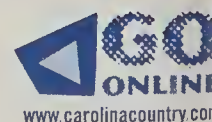
Stories about getting to know your grandparents

Removed from them by a generation, we know most of our grandparents' lives only through pictures and stories. When we're young their pictures and stories don't mean much, but as we gain our own experiences we come to appreciate the lives and times of our grandparents. The stories and pictures published here reveal some touching, captivating moments and emotions that have connected grandparents to grandchildren.

After she died I learned of how my mother's mother at age 16, accompanied by a boy friend, fled Russia during the revolution, worked as an interpreter and made her way to Turkey where at 18 she married a physician, my grandfather. I wish I could have heard her tell about it.

— Michael E.C. Gery

Thanks to everyone who submitted stories. See more stories about your grandparents on our Web site at www.carolinacountry.com. Next month we will publish your accounts of the best investment you ever made. (Deadline was Nov. 15). See the upcoming themes and rules in our "Nothing Could Be Finer" series on page 13.



The young and the restless

Pictured (opposite page) are my great-grandparents, Fred Lee Ervin and Georgia Anna Brittan. Married April 7, 1913, they lived on a farm in Connelly Springs. This picture was taken around 1915. Fred was 25 years old and Georgia was 18.

Considering neither of them ever had a driver's license or drove a car, it was quite a surprise to find this picture of them on this Civil War-era motorcycle. We are not sure what make or model the bike is. If anyone has any information regarding the motorcycle, we would be delighted to hear about it.

Fred was born in 1890 and lived to be 69 years old. Georgia, on the other hand, was born in 1897 and passed away in 1998 at the age of 101. If she would have lived two more years until the year 2000 she would have lived in three different centuries. Imagine that!

*Jeanie Smart Fusco, Connelly Springs
Rutherford EMC*

Respect from Generation X

At the respective ages of 44 and 46, my grandmother and grandfather adopted me, their firstborn grandchild, and raised me as their own daughter. These survivors of the Depression and champions of WWII brought up a Gen X kid reaping the benefits of their sacrifices and hard work, as well as the advances of the Baby Boomers after them.

To experience childhood in an era of prosperity and peace allows a certain security and comfort virtually unknown to previous generations. Bread lines and hand-me-downs and the generosity of a landlord saw my mother's English family through the Depression. Members of my father's family had to be split up among German relatives. At 18 years old, my father enlisted in the Marines during the war.

Only as I mature and gain a fuller understanding of history and the times can I begin to grasp the depth of the hardship they endured. I remember my amazement when my mother told me she did the laundry in a tub with a washboard. Life without washers and dryers? Incomprehensible. And color TV, air conditioning, hot running water, computers, VCRs ... the technology and conveniences we have at our command today were only then being explored, developed and distributed.

Comparatively, the people of my generation and younger are soft. We have it so easy, and we take it all for granted. I have learned so much from "meeting my grandparents." I hold deep respect and admiration for the lives they led and the honesty and integrity with which they led them.

*Tracie Darnell, Cape Carteret
Carteret-Craven Electric Cooperative*

Towed by a wooden Wolverine

My grandfather, G.B. McLeod III, has always been a really special person in my life. I have always looked up to him and he has helped to give me my love of the water.

One of my best memories from when I was little is when I used to spend a week with my grandparents on their sailboat each summer. I remember how Granddaddy made me learn to row the dinghy before he'd let me use the engine. I have since learned the wisdom in this.

The story I want to tell is about my grandfather when he was just a couple of years older than I am now.

His family had a cottage at Wrightsville Beach, and he used to spend most of his summers there. When he was about 19 in the early 1940s, he had seen someone waterskiing for the first time in the sound. He and his friends decided it looked like fun, so he bought the pair of skies, the second pair of water skies in Wrightsville Beach at the time. He and his friends used a 12-foot wooden Wolverine boat with a 22-hp motor and taught themselves how to ski.

My grandfather is 81 years old now. The last time he went skiing was when he was 70 years old.

*George Dawkins,
Pine Knoll Shores
Carteret-Craven Electric
Cooperative*



Granddad's birthday Sunday

Birthdays were celebrated in my grandparents' tiny antebellum church in eastern North Carolina by depositing pennies into a designated tin box in front of the entire Sunday school congregation—a penny for each year. My grandfather, who was a closet poet, shared his birth date with a church member, a lady of his generation. Each year when they went up to drop in their coins, he recited an original poem to this woman for everyone's pleasure.

Everyone, that is, except my grandmother. I always thought she stayed home on Granddad's birthday Sunday to prepare a special dinner for the family assembled to celebrate. However, I learned in adulthood that grandmother was annually angry with my poet laureate Grandpa. It turns out that she boycotted his Sunday recital because she was jealous of his birthday-mate. This from the lady who was so unaffectionate that she turned her head to be hugged or brush-kissed by even her grandchildren.

I still wonder about the two double beds in their bedroom. They had five children.

*Linda D. Edwards, Morganton
Rutherford EMC*



The true American GI

Since the publication of Brokaw's collection, "The Greatest Generation," many have reflected on Americans who fought so courageously and sacrificed so willingly during the Second World War. As a high school history teacher, I have tried to infuse my students with an interest and appreciation for the war and its participants. Yet not until the January 2002 death of my grandfather, Rhuben Raymond Frank, did I gain a true perspective on just how great he and his generation were.

Poring over my grandfather's mementoes months after his death, I really met him for the first time in yellowed forms, letters and pictures. He fought under the American flag during World War II in the Pacific (1944-1945). Later he was part of Germany's occupation during the war's aftermath (where he met and married my German grandmother). He served two tours in the Korean War (1950-51, 1952-53), and one in Vietnam (1967-68).

He was an Oklahoma farm boy turned American GI. His scribbled notes, bronze stars, purple hearts and black and white pictures remain as a testament to the tremendous life he did not always share. Kind, selfless and humble, he was certainly great. Now I finally know just how much.

*Bianka Rhodes Stumpf, Sanford
Central EMC*

Grandma's lesson in table manners

The lesson I learned was "Never put your hand in the food bowls."

I usually ate at Grandma's anyway. We would come in from playing outside, wash up and fix the table. We would put the food on the table and sit down for dinner. Well, one time, Grandma cooked some biscuits, chicken and other good food. I always thought Grandma's food was the best. I still do. So, I was fixing my plate and I was getting my chicken, but I just reached in with my hand and SLAP! My grandma popped my hand.

She said, "You don't stick your hands in the bowls. Use your fork." I just sat there.

She asked me, "Do you want some chicken?"

I said yes.

So she grabbed the chicken with her hand and put it in my plate. I just kept my mouth shut and ate.

*Beth Mullis, Stanfield
Union Power Cooperative*

Sending hope in their final letters

The basket of letters had been sitting in the closet of my family's home for over 50 years. They were letters my grandparents had written to their son, my father, in the months of 1941 before they were taken to a concentration camp in Czechoslovakia. They were Austrian citizens and the letters were written in their native language of German, which no one in my family spoke other than my father.

Many years after Dad had passed away, my mother gave me this basket of letters and I was fortunate to find a kind woman who could translate them for me. As she read page after page, her German accent unfolded the words and it was as if my grandparents were speaking. Finally, I had heard from the grandparents I had never known.

Their words assured their son they were okay and not to worry about them. They were hoping to get visas issued so they could travel to America. They were learning to speak English and were adjusting to the restrictions forced upon them by the Nazis. They spoke of other relatives and the hope of being together soon. Always optimistic, they never complained. And in each letter, they encouraged their son to take care of his health and to succeed in his life in America.

Their visas never arrived and the letters to their son stopped.

*Elise Israel, Candler
Haywood EMC*

A cook for the Mattamuskeet dredge crews

One day while taking my son to baseball practice, my husband bought a newspaper. After skimming through the paper, David jokingly said, "There is a picture of your grandmother in The Beaufort-Hyde."

The pictured titled "Looking Back" was from 1926 and showed a man, Mr. Earl Pugh, and to my surprise a lady named Nora Daniel. After showing the picture to my family and comparing it to other pictures of my grandmother, we decided it had to be her.

When I tried to get in contact with Mr. Pugh, I discovered that he, like my grandmother, had died a few years earlier. I did talk to his son, Mr. Earl Pugh Jr., who told me his father had always kept the picture on his TV as long as he could remember. He also told me my great-grandmother used to cook for the crews that dredged the canals around Lake Mattamuskeet.

He sent me a copy of the original photograph and some pictures of the dredges that my great-grandmother worked on.

Even though it raised a million other questions, I felt my grandmother had shared a story with me that we had not heard before.

*Nora Diane Davis, Pantego
Tideland EMC*



Saved by the cold

I never knew my Grandpa nearly lost his life in WWII, but one day he was telling one of his many stories to my dad and I just happen to overhear him. He was on the USS Missouri somewhere on a foreign coast during the war. His job on the ship rotated every night: one night in the boiler room, the next night outside in the crow's nest. He switched out every other night with a buddy of his.

Well it was his turn in the boiler room one very cold night, but his buddy wasn't too fond of cold weather, so he asked my Grandpa to switch for the night. A German torpedo hit the ship that night and killed everyone in the boiler room. He sure was thankful and so was his family because he got to come home.

*Brent M. Wagner, Lexington
EnergyUnited*

The amazing Mammy Omie



My Mammy Omie (Omie Redding of Ronda) never ceases to amaze me. She is 93 years old and continues to tend her flower and vegetable garden every summer. She cooks delicious meals and still makes her jellies and apple pies. Mammy is still able to touch her toes (flat-handed)—something I can't do as her 27-year-old granddaughter. What an inspiration to stay healthy!

*Rebecca Redding, Wilkesboro
EnergyUnited*

Send us your best Earn \$50

Here are the themes in our "Nothing Could Be Finer" series. Send us your stories and pictures about these themes. If yours is chosen for publication, we'll send you \$50. You don't have to be the best writer. Just tell it from your heart.

**February 2005
Finally On My Own**

Tell us about the first place you lived on your own. Send pictures.

Deadline: Dec. 15

**March 2005
Wacky Plants**

Pictures of strange-looking or unusual garden plants or produce?

Deadline: Jan. 15

**April 2005
Road Trip Horror Stories**

Where did you go and what happened? Send pictures.

Deadline: Feb. 15

**May 2005
Safety Lessons**

Accidents and mishaps that taught you a safety lesson.

Deadline: March 15

**June 2005
On the Farm**

The best things about growing up or living on a farm.

Deadline: April 15

**July 2005
The First Meal I Ever Made**

What was it and how did you like it?

Deadline: May 15

The Rules

1. Approximately 200 words or less.
2. Only one entry per household per month.
3. Photos are welcome. Digital photos must be 300 dpi and actual size.
4. E-mailed or typed, if possible. Otherwise, make it legible.
5. Include your name, electric co-op, mailing address and phone number.
6. If you want your entry returned, please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope. (We will not return others.)
7. We pay \$50 for each submission published. We retain reprint rights.
8. We will post on our Web site more entries than we publish, but can't pay for those submissions. (Let us know if you don't agree to this.)
9. Send to: Nothing Finer, Carolina Country, 3400 Sumner Blvd., Raleigh, NC 27616
Or by e-mail: carolina.country@ncemcs.com. Or through the Web: www.carolinacountry.com

Since home is where the heart is, here is your guide. It's 52 pages of photos, plans and valuable information about the



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laid-back comfort of Southland Log Home living. Call toll-free 1-800-641-4754 or visit southlandloghomes.com to order your Guide. Come, visit our highly visible Charlotte (I-77 exit 36) or Greensboro (I-40/85 exit 135) model homes.

Holiday Gift Guide

Old World Santas

Doll maker and Rutherford EMC member Jean Littlejohn has been designing Old World Santas for over 40 years. Littlejohn sculpts faces, makes bodies, and designs clothing from vintage materials. Each doll is decorated with furs, hand painted bags of toys, special keepsakes and themes. Littlejohn's works have adorned mantles in the Biltmore House in Asheville as well as on the set of "Good Morning America." Prices for these Santas range from \$49 to \$2,500. You can visit Littlejohn's seasonal shop in Clyde, Northwood Santas, from Nov. 26 through Christmas Eve (Thursday through Saturday), and other times by appointment. Orders placed by December 10 will ship in time for Christmas.



Northwood Santas
Jean Littlejohn
43 Thoren Court
Clyde, NC 28721
(828) 627-1107
ncsantamaker@brinet.com

Belle Bags

Belle Bags are one-of-a-kind and limited edition fabric handbags, handmade by Amy Holzman of Waxhaw. Accent details vary from one bag to the next using ribbons, fringe, beading, fabric and handles. Custom orders are available. For a selection of bags, check out www.bellebags.com. For handbags that are already made, orders placed by Dec. 20 will ship in time for Christmas. Please allow an extra two weeks for custom orders and monogramming. The monogrammed handbag with ribbon and bamboo handles featured here is \$84. Holzman, a member of Union Power Cooperative, holds trunk shows of her bags and accessories in the Charlotte area.



Handmade With Flair Belle Bags
Amy Holzman
Waxhaw
(704) 243-2622
www.bellebags.com
www.shysiren.com

Calligraphy



By Martha Scherich

Hand-lettered mailers

Make a statement using calligraphy. Illustration and design artist Martha Scherich of Mooresville offers calligraphy services for announcements, invitations and parties. Scherich also creates hand-lettered poems to frame and give as gifts. Orders placed by Dec. 10 will ship in time for Christmas. Poems or announcements are 25 cents a word. Hand-lettered special occasion envelopes are \$1 apiece for 50 or less.

Martha Scherich
1401 Pine Needle Lane
Mooresville, NC 28115
(704) 664-7187

Red Clay Ramblers CD

Meeting in the Air
Songs of the Carter Family sung and played by
Jim Watson, Tommy Thompson & Mike Craver
- The Original Red Clay Ramblers



"Meeting in the Air: Songs of the Carter Family sung and played by Jim Watson, Tommy Thompson and Mike Craver of the

original Red Clay Ramblers" is on sale now. The recording was first produced in the 1980s and has been digitally remastered and made available on CD along with a lyric booklet. The CD features 14 vintage Carter Family favorites including "Anchored in Love," "I Ain't Gonna Work Tomorrow" and "Dixie Darling." The CD is \$15.99, and shipping is free. Order online at www.mikecraver.com. Or send a check or money order.

Sapsucker Records
841 S. NC Hwy. 150
Lexington, NC 27295
(336) 787-3523
pcraver@infoave.net
www.mikecraver.com

Elizabeth's Pecan Products

B&B Pecan Processors in Turkey has been growing and processing North Carolina pecans since 1981. Try Elizabeth's Exceptional Peanut Brittle, a softer-than-usual brittle with a buttery taste. Or choose from chocolate-covered peanut brittle, jalapeno pecans, or Elizabeth's Extravagant Butter Roasted-Chocolate Covered Pecans, among others. A choice of six different holiday gift samplers are available for \$21 each, or you can build your own North Carolina gift basket. Purchase an 8-ounce tin of peanut brittle for \$9 or a 24-ounce tin for \$20, plus shipping. Visit them at their outlet store off Hwy. 24 in Turkey. You may also order by phone, fax or online. All orders shipped USPS priority.



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(866) EAT-PECANS (866-328-7322)
Fax: (919) 553-4610
www.elizabethspecans.com

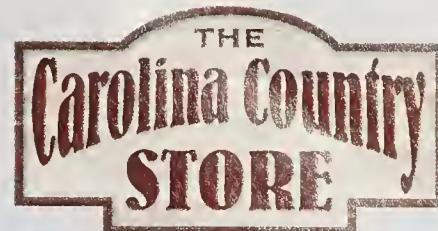
Toe River Studio Tour

The Toe River Studio Tour, Dec. 4-5 in Mitchell and Yancey Counties (about an hour north of Asheville, in Burnsville and Spruce Pine), offers you a chance to meet artists, see their workspaces and maybe even find a bargain. Tours are self-guided with free maps at each studio or online at www.toeriverarts.org. Contemporary and heritage crafts on the tour include blown and stained glass, traditional and art quilts, weaving and spinning, fiber arts, ceramics, paper, baskets, photography, dolls, metal, woodwork, folk art and more. About 100 artists will be showing in more than 75 locations.



Toe River Arts Council
P.O. Box 882
Burnsville, NC 28714
(828) 682-7215
www.toeriverarts.org

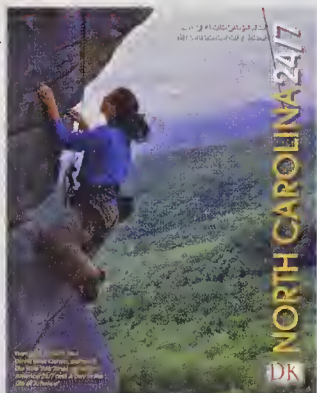
Holiday Gift Guide



"North Carolina 24/7"

The 525 photographs show-cased in this album book are from the America 24/7 project, which harnessed the talents of local photographers in all 50 states.

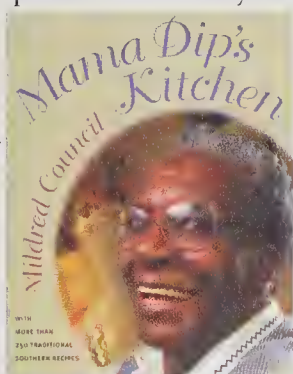
"North Carolina 24/7" takes a visual journey through the state, with intimate story-telling images both exotic and familiar of the daily lives of North Carolinians. Among the interesting images authors Rick Smolan and David Elliott Cohen presents are a mom brushing her four-year-old's teeth in Huntersville, a bodybuilder cuddling a wrinkly bulldog, fiddlers settling into a bluegrass jam in Drexel, a Pentecostal minister leading a gospel sing, and morning mist hugging the slopes of the Great Smokies. The cost is \$24.95.



D.K. Publishing of New York, N.Y.
(212) 213-4800
www.dk.com

"Mama Dip's Kitchen"

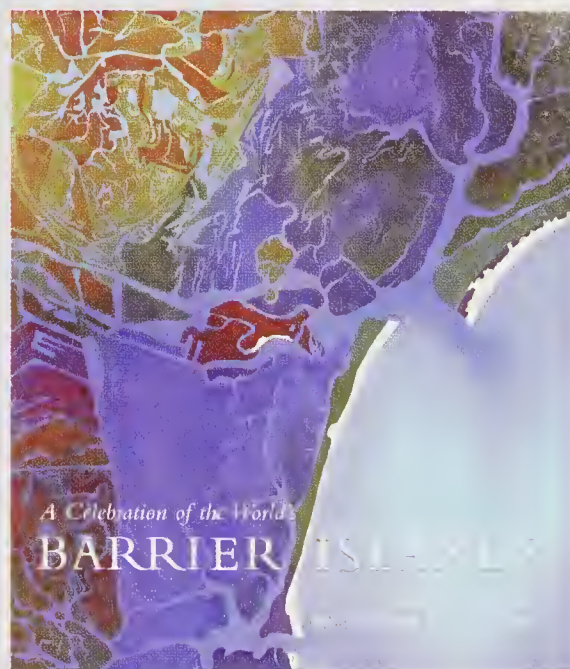
For more than 25 years, Mildred Council—better know as Mama Dip—has nourished hungry folks at her legendary Chapel Hill restaurant. In this cookbook, she offers more than 250 traditional southern recipes—from crackling corn-bread to mud pie. Mama Dip also includes a descriptive memoir of growing up and cooking for her dad, brothers and sisters in Chatham County. Some of the more unusual recipes include country-fried quail, hobo bread and sweet potato pudding. Clothbound is \$24.95, softcover is \$15.95 in bookstores.



University of North Carolina Press
Chapel Hill
(919) 966-3561
www.uncpress.unc.edu

Tracing Barrier Islands

From the Outer Banks to New York's Fire Island, from Iceland to the Netherlands, barrier islands are in almost constant motion. In "A Celebration of the World's Barrier Islands," North Carolina geologist Orrin Pilkey and artist Mary Edna Fraser present a vivid, colorful picture of the dynamic nature of barrier islands. Fraser's batik artwork, many based on aerial photographs combines with Pilkey's informative narration to take readers on an original long-distance journey from hemisphere to hemisphere. Pilkey identifies three major types of barriers—coastal plains, Arctic and delta—each with its own geological characteristics. Using advances in geological mapping, Pilkey identifies traces of ancient barriers marking long-lost shorelines. Published in hardcover, it sells for \$47.95 in bookstores.



Columbia University Press
New York
(800) 944-8648
www.columbia.edu/cu/cup



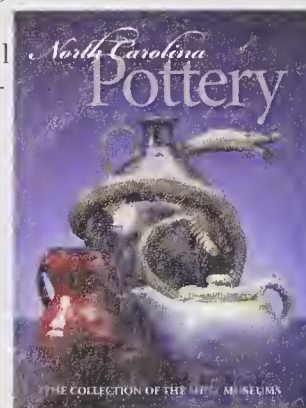
N.C. Cooperative Cooks

Cooks from North Carolina's electric, telephone and other cooperatives contributed to this book of dessert recipes. "Sensational Sweets: North Carolina Cooperative Cooks Collection Cookbook" contains 165 recipes. The book is 8½ by 5½ inches, spiral-bound and stands horizontally like a tent. It costs \$13, including shipping and handling.

Cooperative Council of
North Carolina
P.O. Box 10426
Raleigh, NC 27605
(919) 834-5544

"North Carolina Pottery"

This reference book showcases—mostly in color—more than 400 pieces of pottery ranging from Seagrove and the Moravian settlements to the Catawba Valley and the mountains. Descriptions of individual pieces, as well as information about size, glazes, distinguishing marks, intended use of functional examples and biographical entries on the potters are included. Pieces run from visually extraordinary to everyday ware, and five original essays by recognized authorities explore the art form. Published in clothbound (\$39.95) and softcover (\$24.95), and for sale in bookstores.



University of North Carolina Press
Chapel Hill
(919) 966-3561
www.uncpress.unc.edu

THE ART OF Florence Thomas

By Karen Olson House



Born in a time when many considered art frivolous, long-time Ashe County resident Florence Thomas has persevered to become one of the best-known painters of the Appalachian region.

A new book, "The Art of Florence Thomas," pays tribute to this Blue Ridge Electric member, presenting narration of her fruitful life along with color reproductions of 124 of her vibrant oil and watercolor landscapes, still lifes, portraits and farm animals.

Thomas, now 95, was the seventh of eight children born to Lee and Mildred Young in the Horse Creek section of Ashe County. Her farmer father encouraged his active brood to pursue creative endeavors. "He was interested in the family going into the field they wanted to go in," says Thomas, who lives in Ashe County's Grassy Creek community near the North Carolina-Virginia border.

After she graduated from high school, her school administrator helped her obtain a scholarship to the School of Design for Women in Philadelphia. Thomas boarded the northbound bus at West Jefferson and landed in Philadelphia, where she found her new environment both stimulating and jolting.

She soon learned she lacked basic supplies. "My sister made me a smock but she wasn't used to making them, and it didn't look like everyone else's. It was as clean as it could be. I immediately got out my brush and rubbed my paints on it. It fit in then a little better."

In 1931, she married Paul J. Thomas and pursued her painting while raising a son, Joseph Lee, and daughter, Betty Lou, on a farm. "My husband wanted me to continue my art, so he kept the children and I studied at art school." Later, she and Paul had just moved to a neglected estate in Grassy Creek when Paul suddenly died. "He had rheumatic fever and it left him with a bad heart connection. We hadn't been married but 18 or 20 years when he passed away."

It was up to the grieving widow to put the 350-acre farm, riotous with vegetation, in shape. "I cleaned the farm up with just boys. No men. They cleaned it up with an ax. Finally got it back into production and we raised cattle and sheep." Despite her responsibilities, Thomas dug out time for her

paint brushes. "I constantly thought about it, read about it and sketched when I could."

Thomas went on to practice composition, color and perspective at schools and workshops in Burnsville, Flat Rock and Hendersonville, as well as Skowhegan, ME; Truro, MA; and Chadd's Ford, PA. She also taught art, at first in her basement and later at Wilkes Community College. She helped found the thriving Blue Ridge Art Clan, and exhibited work in Ashe, Wilkes, Watauga, Catawba and Iredell counties.

A favored mentor was Carolyn Wyeth, sister of famous American artist Andrew Wyeth and daughter of great illustrator N.C. Wyeth. "She was very particular. I immediately saw why they

[the Wyeths] got so much mood in their paintings—it was the colors," says Thomas. "She told me to take some tubes out of my box. They were yellows—they were brighter than they used—and to leave certain colors in my box and what colors to buy."

In Ashe County, Thomas and her friend Melba Miller coaxed folks to pose. "It was hard to get a model out in the country. They would have put you in jail if you had gotten a nude model. One old man went to sleep. Our pictures looked like he was dead. I think I threw it away. It looked like we painted in the morgue."

Thomas is working on several paintings. "I'm doing some flowers. Also some sheep that I've been working on for awhile, but I'm not satisfied. "Although she uses photos, Thomas prefers live subjects. "I can see the lights and shadows better. Photography doesn't begin to pick up the natural color on location."

About her choices, Thomas is clear. "I don't think I could have lived without art. When I was on the farm, I always did the necessary things like keeping animals fed. I didn't do housework. If the house wasn't clean, I still did my art."

Ms. Thomas has no prints for sale today. "The Art of Florence Thomas" can be ordered from bookstores or purchased by calling (800) 253-2187 or by visiting www.mcfarlandpub.com. Published by McFarland & Company, Inc. in Jefferson, N.C. Hardcover, \$45.





The Christmas Season at Latta Plantation

Latta Plantation, site of a historic 19th century plantation near Huntersville in northwest Mecklenburg County, introduces new holiday events in December.

Visitors are welcome to help decorate the manor house and slave cabin in 19th century style on Dec. 3 and 4 from 6 to 9 p.m. You can learn about antebellum Christmas traditions while decorating by candlelight and enjoying Mrs. Latta's gingercake. Admission to the event is \$6 for adults, \$5 for seniors and \$4 for students of any age. Children 5 and under are admitted free.

On Dec. 10 and 11 from 6 to 9 p.m., St. Nick will visit the manor house. Parents will bring one wrapped present for each of their children, plus one present for each child to donate to the Marine Corps Toys for Tots program. Reservations are required at (704) 875-2312.

James Latta purchased the site in 1799 and began building the plantation the following year. It remained in the family until 1841. The corn and livestock plantation grew and prospered with slave labor. At one point Latta owned 23 slaves and 11 children. The site also included a mill, quarry and interest in a fishery.


Southern Power acquired the property in 1922 and later merged with Duke Power. In 1973, Duke Power's subsidiary Crescent Land and Timber Co., donated the property to Latta House, Inc., and restoration work began. Latta House deeded the property to Mecklenburg County in 1975 and the county bought additional acreage that is today a nature preserve and education center. Restoration of the main house was completed in 1976 and fully furnished in 1982.

Today, Latta Plantation maintains a lively schedule of living history demonstrations and special events. It is supported in part by the Arts and Science Council and Mecklenburg Parks and Recreation.

The site is served by the EnergyUnited Touchstone Energy cooperative.

Historic Latta Plantation is located on Sample Road, off of Beatties Ford Road in Huntersville. Traveling from Charlotte on I-77 North, take exit 16B (Sunset Road West), make a right at the second light onto Beatties Ford Road, continue on Beatties Ford Road for approximately 5 miles and make a left onto Sample Road. Historic Latta Plantation is located at the end of Sample Road.

For more information, call (704) 875-2312 or visit www.lattaplantation.org.



A retirement plan for **Racing Greyhounds**

Text and photos by Mark Brumley



*Greyhound
lovers say
their breed is
intelligent,
observant
and easy to
train like
Kiowa (left)
and Nikki.*

Ever see a “couch potato” go from 0 to 45 mph in three strides?

Get a greyhound and you just might—especially if you ignore the advice of breed experts to keep the dogs on a leash at all times when they are outdoors.

Providing good homes for former racing greyhounds and educating people about this fascinating, friendly breed are part of the mission of a young nonprofit organization in Randleman, Randolph County.

Project Racing Home is a retirement facility and adoption agency for greyhounds that have run their last races and face uncertain futures. Most of these sporting dogs come from tracks in Florida and West Virginia.

“We’re fairly new and we’re trying real hard to get the word out to let people know we’re here,” said Donna Mitchell of Level Cross, the vice president of the Project Racing Home’s board of directors and a member of Randolph EMC.

Project Racing Home was founded as a way to give greyhound owners a responsible way to retire their dogs after their careers have ended. It is one of about 300 such organizations that have formed in the past 20 years and helped make racing more humane.

“We offer them, basically, a retirement plan for their dogs,” said Kimberly Jewell of Greensboro, Project Racing Home’s full-time kennel director and one of the organization’s founders. “We’re not here to fight against the industry.”

Project Racing Home is located on six acres that it bought in southern Guilford County near the intersection of N.C. 62 and U.S. 220 Bypass. The organization built its home there and opened it in April 2003 with 2,500 square feet, 48 indoor crates, and spacious, fenced outdoor exercise areas. The facility resembles the dogs’ old training compounds

for a reason: to help smooth their transition into normal life. From the time the dogs are about a year old, they are in training and kept on a highly-regimented schedule.

“It’s like an Olympic Village for athletes,” Jewell said.

“Thousands of dollars are poured into these dogs before we get them,” Mitchell said.

Retirement can take place suddenly for greyhounds. Barbara Wood of Greensboro said her dog, Kiowa, can attest to that.

“She ran a race the night before she was put on the truck,” said Wood, the president of Project Racing Home’s board.

Project Racing Home prepares the dogs for life with a family in a regular household. Jewell said her work gives her a lot of joy and satisfaction, although she sometimes gets attached to the dogs and is sad to see them leave with their new owners.

“When a dog goes out of here, when the crate’s empty, you know it gives a dog a chance to have a good home,” said Jewell, who owns five greyhounds.

Jewell is Project Racing Home’s only full-time employee. All of the other workers are volunteers. There are about 25 of them, including some that just show up to walk the dogs. The volunteers help keep Project Racing Home running, and there’s always a need for more, Mitchell said. Because it is a nonprofit, and one that has really just gotten started, the organization also relies on donations.

Gentle, domestic and cat-friendly

In October, volunteers took some greyhounds to an antiques festival in Reidsville, strapped jackets with pockets on the dogs, and took them through the crowd to solicit contributions. The greyhounds collected a little more

than \$400 at the event, Mitchell said. She added that volunteers weren't worried about taking the greyhounds to the antiques festival. Even as racing dogs, they interact with people all of the time, giving them the chance to become socialized, she said. Greyhounds, in fact, are so gentle that they are often used as therapy dogs in nursing homes and hospitals, Mitchell said.

"You just don't hear about these dogs being aggressive," said Mitchell, who hopes to have her greyhound, Nikki, certified as a therapy dog.

Pesky children can try the patience of even good dogs, but greyhound enthusiasts say their breed will usually walk away from kids that are bothering them rather than bite.

Sue McNoldy of Winston-Salem adopted her dog Radar from Project Racing Home in May.

"He's been great with the kids," said McNoldy, as she dropped Radar off at Project Racing Home for boarding. Her daughter, Hanna, 7, sat on a sofa in the lobby and stroked another greyhound.

Many greyhounds can also co-exist peacefully with cats, Mitchell said. Project Racing Home keeps a "test cat" to determine which dogs get along with felines.

The drawback of greyhounds' non-confrontational personalities is that it makes them poor watchdogs, although their size can be intimidating. They range from 40 to 80 pounds in weight, and 24 to 30 inches tall, with males growing larger than females.

Despite their size, greyhounds don't eat like horses, Jewell said. They can curl up their sleek bodies into small balls to nap and sleep about 17 hours a day.

"They're known as couch potatoes," Mitchell said.

Greyhounds' laid-back nature probably contradicts the image that many people have of the dogs. They're racing dogs, so they must be hyperactive, right? Not true, Mitchell said. Greyhounds are usually content with a brief walk everyday or playtime in the backyard.

"You don't have to have a 100-acre farm to have a greyhound," Jewell said.

So, anyone thinking about getting a greyhound for a running partner had better think twice, Mitchell said. Although images of the dogs have been appearing on the sides of buses for years, they aren't bred for the long haul. They're sprinters. Greyhounds can be trained as jogging pals, but it takes time to get them accustomed to that much activity.

"Greyhounds are intelligent and easy to train," Mitchell said. "They observe you and fall into your routine."

Another consideration for people thinking about opening their home to a greyhound is that they must literally open their home to the dog. With their short hair and low body fat, greyhounds are ill-suited to the life of a yard dog that has to weather extreme temperatures. The good news, Mitchell said, is that greyhounds shed very little and don't have much of an odor. Even people with pet allergies can often tolerate greyhounds because they don't give off much dander or body oil, Mitchell said.

In addition to boarding, Project Racing Home also offers greyhound grooming and pet supplies. The dogs, which live about 10 to 12 years, come in an array of colors with a variety of markings, from fawn to brindle. People that come in to adopt a dog often find that they're the ones under inspection.

"Lots of times, the greyhound will pick the person," Wood said. "We see that happen quite often. Once a person actually links up with a greyhound, they'll always have a greyhound."

"They're addictive," Mitchell said.

Mark Brumley is a writer who lives in Asheboro. His article on the Petty family's Victory Junction camp appeared in October's Carolina Country magazine.



Randolph EMC member Donna Mitchell is vice president of Project Racing Home's board. She hopes her greyhound, Nikki, will be certified as a therapy dog.

Gotta get a greyhound?

Project Racing Home is located at 7015 Faulkner Road in Randleman. The kennel is open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays, and by appointment on weekdays.

The adoption fee is \$275 and includes:

- Spaying and neutering
- Vaccinations
- Parasite testing
- Dental exams
- Bathing and grooming
- Flea and tick treatment
- Pet portfolio of dog's records
- Muzzle and collar
- ID tag
- Registration with National Greyhound Association



Call (336) 674-5744 or log onto www.getagreyhound.com for more information on adopting an greyhound or volunteering with the organization.

Tax-deductible donations may be sent to Project Racing Home Greyhound Adoptions, P.O. Box 8434, Greensboro, NC 27419.

Tax Credits

for low-income workers and families

Questions & Answers

When filing your federal income tax return for 2004, remember to check for tax credits that may apply to you. Two credits that might be of interest to you are the Earned Income Tax Credit and the Child Tax Credit.

In addition to the Earned Income Tax Credit there is another credit that you might be entitled to receive prior to filing a tax return: the Advanced Earned Income Tax Credit (AEITC).

What is the Earned Income Tax Credit?

The Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) is a federal income tax credit for low-income working individuals and families. The credit reduces the amount of federal tax you owe. When the EITC exceeds the amount of taxes owed, it results in a tax refund to those who claim and qualify for the credit. Even workers who do not have a child can get the EITC. Even if you do not owe income tax you can get the EITC. But, you must file a tax return.

How do I know if I am eligible for the Earned Income Tax Credit?

You must:

- ✓ Have a valid Social Security number
- ✓ Be a U.S. citizen or resident alien all year
- ✓ Have earned income
- ✓ Be at least age 25 but under age 65 (if you do not have a qualifying child)
- ✓ Have lived in the United States more than half the tax year.

You are NOT eligible if you:

- ✗ Are married filing separately
- ✗ File Form 2555 or Form 2555-EZ
- ✗ Have investment income over \$2,650
- ✗ Are a qualifying child of another person

What are the income limits and tax credit amounts?

- ✓ Workers with one child who earn less than \$30,338 in 2004 (or less than \$31,338 for married workers) are eligible for a credit of up to \$2,604.
- ✓ Workers with two or more children who earn less than \$34,458 in 2004 (or less than \$35,458 for married workers) are eligible for a credit of up to \$4,300.
- ✓ Workers without a qualifying child who earn less than \$11,490 in 2004 (or less than \$12,490 for married workers) are eligible for a credit of up to \$390.

What is a "qualifying child"?

A qualifying child cannot be used by more than one person to claim the EITC. A child is a qualifying child if he or she meets three tests. The three tests are:

- ✓ Your son, daughter, adopted child, grandchild, stepchild, or eligible foster child and claimed as your dependent
- ✓ Under age 17 at the end of 2004
- ✓ A U.S. citizen or resident

What if I'm not a U.S. citizen?

Many immigrants are eligible for the EITC, including Green Card holders, refugees and others legally authorized to work. To claim the EITC, workers and any child claimed for the EITC must have a valid Social Security number. The credit does not affect your immigration status.

I work and get public assistance benefits. If I get these credits, will I lose my other benefits?

The EITC does not count as income in determining eligibility for Food Stamps, SSI, Medicaid, cash assistance, or public housing. The Child Tax Credit does not count for any federally-funded benefit program.

What is the Child Tax Credit?

By claiming a Child Tax Credit, you may be able to reduce the federal tax you owe by \$1,000 for each qualifying child who was under the age 17 in 2004. See the requirements listed below for a "qualifying child."

- ✓ Claimed as your dependent
- ✓ Under age 17 at the end of 2004
- ✓ Your son, daughter, adopted child, grandchild, stepchild, or eligible foster child
- ✓ A U.S. citizen or resident

What is the Advanced Earned Income Tax Credit (AEITC)?

If you expect to be eligible for EITC for tax year 2004, you may request AEITC payments which enable you to receive a portion of the credit in your regular paycheck throughout 2005. (The AEITC is not available to workers who do not have a qualifying child.) To get the AEITC payments, ask your employer for Form W-5 (Earned Income Credit Advance Payment Certificate), complete the form and give the lower part to your employer. You also can get the form W-5 by calling (800)TAX-FORM.

Where can I get help?

You may figure the EITC yourself by following instructions in IRS Publication 596, Earned Income Credit (EIC). You may also ask the IRS to figure it for you, or use the services of a tax professional, or get free assistance from a Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) site. To find your closest VITA site, call the IRS at (800) 829-1040.

EMC & 4-H team up for youth programs



Seventy golfers gathered at Grandover Golf Resort & Conference Center in Greensboro on Saturday, October 9, 2004, for the 8th Annual EMC State 4-H Clover Classic to raise funds for North Carolina's 4-H Youth Development program. This year, 11 county 4-H programs in partnership with regional electric cooperatives held local tournaments that culminated in this statewide tournament, sponsored by the North Carolina Electric Membership Corporation (NCEMC).

After a round of golf, the golfers and their guests relaxed and shopped the silent auction at an awards dinner at Grandover Resort. Proceeds will go towards 4-H Marketing efforts and other awards programs that provide recognition, travel opportunities and scholarships to 4-H members.

"Grand patron" for the EMC State 4-H Clover Classic was the North Carolina Touchstone Energy cooperatives network. "Golf patrons" included regional cooperatives that partnered in local tournaments and corporate sponsors: Jones-Onslow EMC, Central EMC, Albemarle EMC, Piedmont EMC, Edgecombe-Martin County EMC, Union Power Cooperative, South River EMC, Franklin Street Advisors, GDS & Associates, Wachovia, and Grant Thornton.

The nine local tournaments raised over \$60,000 this year to help fund programs for the local counties. Counties use this money to help fund intrastate exchanges, offset project and curriculum costs, scholarships for camp, and many other programmatic needs.

The counties who will benefit from the money raised at the local tournaments are: Cumberland, Edgecombe, Halifax, Harnett, Lee, Onslow, Orange, Pasquotank, Person, Sampson and Union.

Each year a local EMC is awarded the President's Cup honoring outstanding partnerships between the local EMC and the county 4-H program. This year the Edgecombe-Martin County EMC golf tournament raised \$8,000, all of which goes the Edgecombe County 4-H programs. The President's Cup is endowed through the Dr. Mike Davis Family Fund for 4-H Innovation and Excellence.

The North Carolina 4-H Youth Development program serves over 181,145 youths, ages 5-19, in North Carolina and utilizes over 23,000 adult and youth volunteers annually. Local 4-H programs are supported with

resources from the Cooperative Extension Service within the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at North Carolina State University and North Carolina A & T State University. 4-H has offices in all 100 counties plus the Cherokee Reservation. For more information about the 4-H Youth Development Program, contact your local Cooperative Extension office or the state 4-H office at (919) 515-3242. Mailing address: NCSU Box 7606, Raleigh, NC, 27695-7606.



The Edgecombe-Martin County EMC team won the 4-H President's Cup at this year's state tournament. The EMC's tournament raised \$8,000 for 4-H. The foursome included Marion Kent, Mike Deans, Donnie Harrelson and Eddie Stocks.



Who brings the gifts on Christmas Eve to children all over the world?

Belgium: *Saint Nicholas*

Brazil: *Papai Noel*

Canada and the United States: *Santa Claus*

The Czech Republic: *Svaty Mikalas*

Denmark: *Julemanden*

France and Quebec: *Père Noël*

Japan: *Hoteiosho*

Netherlands: *Sinterklaas*

Russia: *Dedoushka Moroz / Baboushka*

Spain: *Balthazar (of the Three Wise Men)*

Sweden: *The Tomte (Christmas gnome)*

United Kingdom: *Father Christmas*

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classroom chuckle

What can Santa give away and still keep?

A cold

What do you get when you cross a calculator and a friend?

A friend you can count on

Getting To Know...

Name: Shirley Caesar

Born: Oct. 13, 1938, the 10th of 12 children, in Durham.

Known for: Shirley Caesar is perhaps the nation's best known gospel singer. She is known to many as "the Queen of Gospel," but she is also an evangelist, a pastor, a civic leader and a humanitarian. In 1970, she created Caesar Outreach Ministries in Durham to provide counseling, food, clothes, shelter and emergency funds to those in need. In the late 1980s, she served as a member of Durham's City Council. In 1990, she accepted the pastorate of the Mount Calvary Word of Faith Church in Raleigh.

Accomplishments: Shirley Caesar has won 11 Grammy awards, recorded over 40 albums, sung for three U.S. Presidents and was inducted into the Gospel Music Hall of Fame. She has performed in three Broadway gospel musicals, sung on movie soundtracks while working as pastor of her church in Raleigh and giving hands-on leadership at her Outreach Ministries in her hometown of Durham. In 2000, Caesar took her music ministry on a 60-city tour of the United States. In 2001, she toured Australia.



Photo from "The Lady the Melody, & the Word" by Shirley Caesar.

Christmas at the White House, 2005

Smokey Holler Tree Farm in Laurel Springs, Alleghany County, is home of the 2005 Grand Champion Christmas tree, as selected by the National Christmas Tree Association this summer. Blue Ridge Electric members Earl, Betsy and Buddy Deal will present an 18-foot North Carolina Fraser fir to the President and First Lady in 2005 for display in the Blue Room of the White House. This is a top honor for any Christmas tree grower, and Earl Deal said that he had been waiting 30 years for this moment.

NC Christmas Trees

North Carolina has 2,500 growers producing an estimated 50 million Fraser fir Christmas trees growing on over 25,000 acres.

The North Carolina Christmas tree industry is ranked second in the nation in number of trees harvested and first in the nation in terms of dollars made per tree.

The North Carolina Fraser fir Christmas tree is the most popular Christmas tree in North America.

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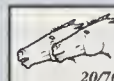
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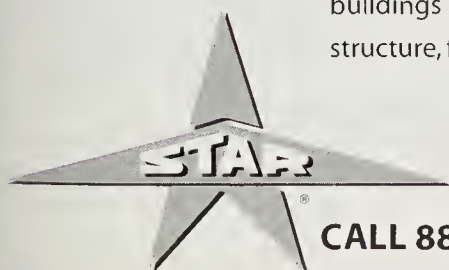
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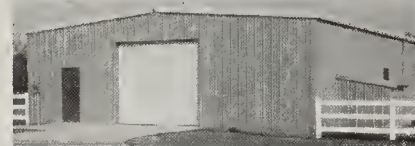


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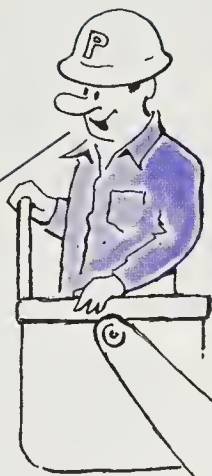
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O.K., Pers, what did your English teacher call Santa's helpers?

g t o l i e a d p h r
w n p t g r g



Use the capital letters in the code clue below to fill in the blanks above.
"A B C D E I L N O R S T U" means
power and light

Answers on page 33.

MATCH BOXES

1	0	0	6	9	4
N	E	E	D	W	T

3	2	3	8	7	6	1
R	S	R	O	I	D	N

X 5
B

X 3
R

Solve these two multiplication problems and write your answers in the box tops. Then match the boxes in your answers with the boxes in the problems to find the names of a North Carolina county and its county seat in your answers.

U N S C R A B L I T R A M B I T

When Winston Churchill was a member of Parliament the word "lie" could not be used in parliamentary debate. Not to be deterred, Churchill charged an opponent with

h e g d a l i n i r a o p n
a l e s p o h a h t w e

Use the capital letters in the code clue below to fill in the blanks above.
"A C D E G I L M N O R T U X" means
power and lights

π $\sqrt[3]{2}$ c^p **MATH**
a WIRDZ

Letters have been substituted for digits in this division problem. Given D=4, can you replace the digits that get SOUP out of NUTS?

$$\begin{array}{r} \text{S O U P} \\ \text{D } \overline{\text{N U T S}} \\ 4 \text{ N} \\ \text{— U} \\ \text{D} \\ \text{4} \\ \text{S T} \\ \text{S D} \\ \text{4} \\ \text{O S} \\ \text{O S} \\ \text{—} \end{array}$$

SOUTHERN
exposure

Salisbury Post columnist Sara Pitzer writes that it takes just one "fake red-head" to change a light bulb, "but she has to have advice from everybody on the staff at Ace Hardware." In her own defense, she pointed out that it wasn't just one light bulb, it was 10 of them—fluorescent tubes in ceiling fixtures.

"They never taught us this in Home Ec. I wish they had. Knowing how to change fluorescent tubes would have been a lot more useful to me than making white sauce. Apparently every male in our culture has this light bulb information, but you don't just walk up to a guy and say, 'Hey, wanna come to my house and change some light bulbs?'"

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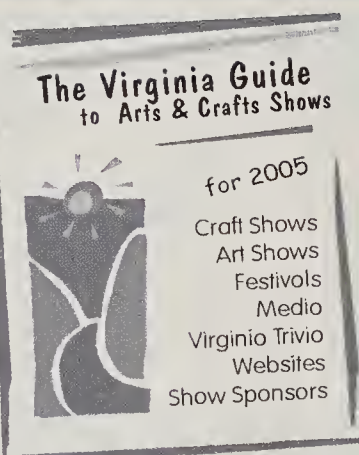
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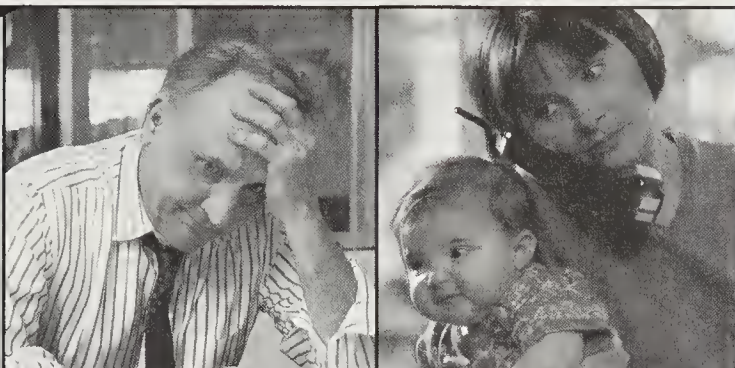
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\$100,000.00	\$428.38	3/1 Fixed/Arm	**3.13	4.03%
\$100,000.00	\$752.28	15 Yr. Fixed	*4.25	4.68%
\$100,000.00	\$529.21	30 Yr. Fixed	*4.88	5.12%

*Conforming for refi. Also Great Jumbos. **Non-conforming Arm's fixed for 1 yr. & 3 yrs., call for other ARM's, Mfg. Homes, Slow Credit, Interest only, No Income Verification, Bankruptcy, etc. Ask about mortgage rewards for timely payments.

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December *EVENTS*



Cashore Marionettes will appear Dec. 2 at 7 p.m. at the Pamlico County Civic and Cultural Center in Oriental. Call (252) 249-3362 or visit www.pamlicomusic.org.

MOUNTAINS

Wreath Making Workshop

Dec. 2, Brasstown
(800) 365-5724
www.folkschool.org

Tree Lighting & GospelFEST

Dec. 3, Belmont
(704) 825-4490
www.dsb.org

Festival of Trees

Dec. 2-4, Murphy
(828) 835-8909

Hometown Christmas Celebration

Dec. 4, Murphy
(828) 837-6821

Holiday Open House

Dec. 4, West Jefferson
(336) 846-ARTS

Christmas at the Cabin

Dec. 4, Kings Mountain
(704) 739-1019

Appalachian Potters Market

Dec. 4, Marion
(828) 652-8610

Toe River Studio Tour

Dec. 4-5, Burnsville
(828) 682-7215
www.toeriverarts.org

Ashe County Choral Society

Dec. 5, West Jefferson
(336) 846-ARTS

Fireside Sale

Dec. 5, Brasstown
(800) 365-5724
www.folkschool.org

Children of the Season

Dec. 9, Belmont
(704) 825-4490
www.dsb.org

A Christmas Carol in Rhyme

Dec. 9, West Jefferson
(336) 846-ARTS

Historic Home Tour

Dec. 12, Cherokee County
(828) 937-6821
www.heritagepartners.org

Christmas Parade

Dec. 13, Old Fort
(828) 668-7223

The Runaway Christmas Tree

Dec. 14, Spindale
(828) 286-9990
www.FoundationShows.org

Sounds of the Season

Dec. 16, Belmont
(704) 825-4490
www.dsb.org

"The Runaway Christmas Tree"

Dec. 16, West Jefferson
(336) 846-ARTS

Kids Christmas Party

Dec. 18, Brasstown
(800) 365-5724
www.folkschool.org

Traditions of the Season

Dec. 23, Belmont
(704) 825-4490
www.dsb.org

Music & Tree Fest

Through Dec. 29, West Jefferson
(336) 846-ARTS

New Year's Eve Possum Drop

Dec. 31, Brasstown
(828) 837-3797

PIEDMONT

Organ Recital

Dec. 1, 8, 15, 22, 29,
Winston-Salem
(888) 653-7253
www.oldsalem.org

Deck the Halls Craft Sale

Dec. 2-11, Winston-Salem
(336) 723-7395
www.sawtooth.org

Christmas Tree Lighting

Dec. 3, Winston-Salem
(336) 354-1500
www.dwsp.org

Tis the Season

Children's Theater
Dec. 3-4, Winston-Salem
(336) 725-4531

Dempsey Essick Gallery Christmas Open House

Dec. 3-5, Lexington
(336) 731-3499

A Plantation Christmas

Dec. 3-4, Huntersville
(704) 875-2312
www.lattaplantation.org

Bill Mize Acoustic Jazz

Dec. 3, Pilot Mountain
(336) 368-7111
www.sawbriar.com

BEBRF Support Meeting

Dec. 4, Monroe
(704) 238-0264

Festival of Carols

Dec. 4, Winston-Salem
(336) 722-4022
www.piedmontchambersingers.org

West End Holiday Home Tour

Dec. 4, Winston-Salem
(336) 725-1083

The Nutcracker

Dec. 4-5, 9-12, Winston-Salem
The Stevens Center
(336) 721-1945

Raleigh Ringers

Dec. 4, Mocksville
(336) 751-3000
www.daviearts.org

Santa Train

Dec. 4-19, Spencer
(877) NCTM-FUN
www.nctrans.org

Christmas Parade

Dec. 4, Love Valley
(704) 592-2570

Four Christmases for Children

Dec. 4, Winston-Salem
(336) 924-8191
www.bethabarapark.org

Holiday Parade

Dec. 4, Winston-Salem
(336) 777-3663

Weihnachtfest:

A Taste of the Holiday Season

Dec. 4, Winston-Salem
(888) 653-7253
www.oldsalem.org

Nutcracker Suite on Ice

Dec. 4, Hillsborough
(919) 644-0339

Christmas Lovefeast

Dec. 5, Winston-Salem
(336) 758-5210
www.wfu.edu

Holiday Tour of Historic Homes

Dec. 5, Mocksville
(336) 751-8304

Holiday Home Tour

Dec. 5, Lake Park
(704) 882-7706
www.lakeparknc.com

Christmas Candlelight Tour

Dec. 5, Hillsborough
(919) 732-8156

Christmas Craft Show

Dec. 5, Hillsborough
(919) 732-8714

Holiday Jubilee

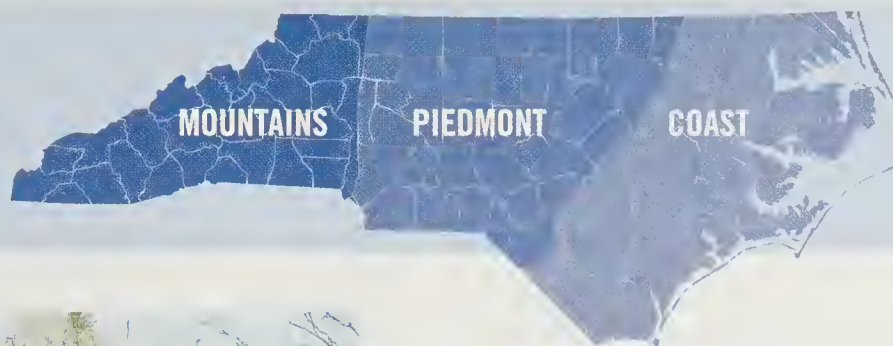
Dec. 5, Fayetteville
(910) 486-1330
www.VisitFayettevilleNC.com

Handel's Messiah (part 1)

Dec. 5, Fayetteville
www.unccfsu.edu

Jingle Bell Express

Dec. 6-17, Spencer
(877) NCTM-FUN
www.nctrans.org



Hillsborough's annual Christmas Candlelight Tour of the downtown historic area is set for Dec. 5 from noon to 5 p.m. Besides seasonal decorations, there's live music and refreshments. \$15 on the day itself, \$12 for advance tickets, discounts for children and seniors. Call (919) 732-8156.

Artist Forums

Trotman & Rivers
Dec. 7, Charlotte
Mint Museum of Art
(704) 337-2000
www.mintmuseum.org

Christmas by Lamplight

Dec. 7-8, Winston-Salem
(336) 325-2298

Capitol Tree Lighting

Dec. 9, Raleigh
(919) 807-7900

Open House/Craft Festival

Dec. 9-12, Franklinton
(919) 570-0745
www.cardenfarmsssoap.com

Candlelight Festivities

Dec. 9-11, 30, Jan. 1,
Winston-Salem
(888) 653-7253
www.oldsalem.org

Cowboy Christmas

Pro Rodeo & Gift Show
Dec. 10-12, Raleigh
(704) 882-6994

Scrooge Dinner Theater

Dec. 10, Oakboro
(704) 985-6987
www.oakboromusichall.com

SciWorks Holiday Free Friday

Dec. 10, Winston-Salem
(336) 767-6730
www.sciworks.org

Christmas Parade

Dec. 11, Fayetteville
(910) 483-5311
www.VisitFayettevilleNC.com

Breakfast with Santa

Dec. 11, Fayetteville
(910) 483-5311
www.fascinate-u.com

Bob Timberlake

Christmas Open House
Dec. 11, Lexington
(800) 244-0095
www.bobtimberlake.com

Holiday Tour of Homes

Dec. 11-12, Chapel Hill
(919) 942-7818

JD Crowe & the New South

Dec. 11, Mocksville
(336) 751-3000
www.daviearts.org

Holiday Parade of Homes

Dec. 12, Chatham County
(919) 742-3333

The Spirit of the Season

Dec. 12, Fayetteville
(910) 483-5311
www.VisitFayettevilleNC.com

Old Salem

Christmas Homes Tour
Dec. 12, Winston-Salem
(336) 721-7300
www.oldsalem.org

Celebrate with Wildlife

Dec. 12, Gastonia
(704) 866-6908
www.schielemuseum.org

Piano-Comedy Concert

Emile Pandolfi
Dec. 12, Salisbury
(704) 633-1474
www.rccamusic.com

Colonial Christmas

Dec. 12, Gastonia
(704) 866-6908
www.schielemuseum.org

Holiday Open House

Dec. 14-15, Pinnacle
(336) 325-2298

B.E. Taylor Christmas

Dec. 14, Winston-Salem
(336) 721-1945
www.betaylor.com

"A Christmas Carol"

Dec. 17-19, Winston-Salem
(336) 721-1945
www.ncarts.edu/ncsaprod/StevensCenter

A Child's

Celebration of Christmas
Dec. 18, Winston-Salem
(336) 721-7300
www.oldsalem.org

St. Nicholas Day

Dec. 18, Winston-Salem
(888) 653-7253
www.oldsalem.org

Candlelight Lovefeast Service

Dec. 24, Winston-Salem
(336) 722-6171
www.home-moravian.org

Kwanzaa Celebration

Dec. 26-Jan. 1, Winston-Salem
(336) 725-5614

First Night Raleigh 2005

Dec. 31, Raleigh
(919) 832-8699
www.artspllosure.org

COAST

The Cashore Marionettes

Dec. 2, Oriental
(252) 249-3362
www.pamlicomusic.org

Winter on the Waterfront

Dec. 2-4, Manteo
(252) 475-1500
www.roanokeisland.com

Christmas Parade

Dec. 3, Carolina Beach
(910) 458-5507

Core Sound Waterfowl Weekend

Dec. 3-5, Harkers Island
(252) 728-1500
www.coresound.com

River Towne Christmas

Dec. 3-5, Columbia
(252) 796-1996
www.visittyrrellcounty.com

Festival of Trees

Dec. 3-9, Morehead City
(252) 247-9796

Music in the Streets

Dec. 3, Washington
(252) 974-2632

Holiday Flotilla

Dec. 4, Carolina Beach
(910) 458-7116

continued on pg.30

LISTING INFORMATION

Deadline for Feb: Dec 25

Deadline for March: Jan 25

Submit Listings on Our Web Site

Visit www.carolinacountry.com and click on "See NC" to add your event to both the magazine and our Web site.

Or Submit Listings by Mail, Fax or E-Mail Please include title, date(s), location, phone number and/or Web site url. Photos (300 dpi or hard copies) are welcome.

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DECEMBER EVENTS

Old Wilmington by Candlelight

Dec. 4, Wilmington
(910) 762-0492

The Cashore Marionettes

Dec. 4, Manteo
(252) 475-1500
www.roanokeisland.com

Christmas at the Market

Dec. 4, Edenton
(252) 482-5343

I'll Be Home for Christmas

Dec. 4, Elizabeth City
(252) 335-1453
www.museumofthealbemarle.com

Harmony Hall Christmas

Dec. 4, White Oak
(910) 866-4844

Christmas Flotilla

Dec. 4, Washington
(252) 946-9168
www.originalwashington.com

Christ Church Cookie Walk

Dec. 4, New Bern
(252) 636-0202

Festival of Trees

Through Dec. 5, Wilmington
(910) 772-5444
www.hospiceandlifecarecenter.org

Somerset Place Open House

Dec. 5, Creswell
(252) 797-4560

Open House at Poplar Grove

Dec. 5, Wilmington
(910) 686-9518
www.poplargrove.com

I'll be Home for Christmas

Dec. 7-8, Murfreesboro
(252) 398-5922
www.murfreesboronc.com

Caroling on the Green

Dec. 10, Edenton
(252) 482-2637

Candlelight Tour

Dec. 10-11, Edenton
(252) 482-7800

Christmas Parade

Dec. 11, Edenton
(252) 482-3400

Christmas Illumination

Dec. 11, Williamston
(800) 776-8566

Christmas Tour of Homes

Dec. 11-12, Williamston
(800) 776-8566

Christmas Parade

Dec. 12, Aurora
(252) 322-4188

Colonial Christmas Open House

Dec. 17, Hertford
Newbold-White House
(252) 426-7567

Kwanzaa

Dec. 26, Robersonville
(252) 795-4848

New Year's Eve

Countdown/Fireworks
Dec. 31, Kure Beach
(910) 458-5507
www.islandoflights.com

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The annual Core Sound Waterfowl Weekend takes place Dec. 4-5 at Core Sound Waterfowl Museum, Harkers Island. In addition to carvings and photos, there's storytelling, fun for kids, food, music and related programs. Call (252) 728-1500. Visit www.coresound.com.

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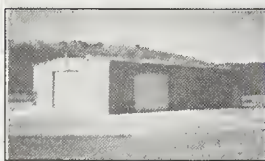
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With winter's arrival, focus on preparations for next spring. Now is the time to locate and plant background trees and shrubs and to craft a plan for long-range projects. Look ahead to the landscape picture of the future.

How to plan a landscape

Consider the care of the vegetation you plant, as well as its appearance. Develop a budget for landscaping, and be careful to work within your budget. Landscaping a new site, or re-landscaping an established area, can be very expensive if not carefully monitored as work progresses.

On a new property, meet with the architect to discuss his or her options for landscaping. Visit landscape nurseries to gather information on plants, including grasses, which will perform well in your climate and can be maintained within your budget. Visit your local Cooperative Extension office to gather information on plants that do well in your area. Take soil samples from the site and have them analyzed to determine what plants will perform best or what may be added to the soil to help performance. The Extension office can advise you on how to take soil samples. Some garden centers also sell soil testing kits.

Fill in the gaps

Fast-growing perennials such as butterfly bushes, daisies or salvias will fill in spaces while trees and shrubs are growing to their mature heights. Plant ground covers such as ajuga, ivy or sedum to add depth. Choose dwarf trees and shrubs to allow closer spacing. For instance, instead of planting full-size southern magnolia, try a selection that will grow to only 30 feet, such as little gem or Bracken's brown beauty, as opposed to *Magnolia grandiflora* that will grow to 60 feet.

A good rule of thumb is to plant a tree or shrub half its mature height when locating it near any building, walkway or boundary. This might make the landscape seem stark or empty



Symphytum x uplandicum Variegata, or uplandish comfrey, offers 18-inch long, fuzzy green leaves with creamy yellow borders. It requires part sun to light shade and grows to 24 inches tall. In late spring, this natural hybrid is topped with light blue, bell-shaped flowers.

at first, but in the long run, you'll definitely appreciate the space. Don't forget that an average tree will grow from a sapling to the top of a two-story house in about 15 to 20 years. Always buy plants with tags stating their mature sizes because individual selections can vary widely.

A common mistake homeowners make is trying to get an instant landscape. That's a quick way to waste money on yard development. A tree with a 2-inch diameter trunk can easily outgrow a larger tree because it will transition faster and is less likely to go into transition shock when planted.

House plants

When using house plants for indoor interest and beauty during cold months group only those with similar light requirements.

An understanding of form, color, texture and balance will help you create an attractive collage. The general form and size of a plant will have considerable influence on its position in the design. As in any plant grouping or floral design, a tall vertical plant probably is best used at the back of the grouping, while short vertical plants look better at the front, where they "tie-down" the design. For example, tall gladiolus often is used as a background flower in flower arrangements. A plant with a strong horizontal form gives the design a sense of stability. An irregular form will help fill in the voids. Keep in mind if the forms are too similar, the overall composition will seem artificial. If they are too diverse, it will look unresolved.

Texture is both visual and tangible. For example, the leaves of a rubber plant are not just big, they are smooth and glossy. African tree fern looks and feels soft. The feel is important, but consider its visual texture. Uniform textures will make the design monotonous.



Todd Gaul © 2002
www.photophile.com

Selecting landscape plants

- Select slow-growing plants that require minimum trimming.
- Use plants that do well in your climate and require minimum special care.
- Use ground covers rather than grass in small or isolated areas such as beneath shade trees.
- Avoid isolated plants in lawn areas, because the lawn creates an overall green carpet which unites the landscape. A mowing strip between shrubbery beds and lawn areas will reduce maintenance time.
- Properly install plant material, and apply mulch to retain soil moisture and retard weed growth.
- Select plants whose natural growth form is best suited to the overall design.
- If it's color you want, flowering shrubs and trees can accent annuals and perennials and require less care than flowerbeds. Trees and shrubs offer vertical accents.



For more December gardening advice, go to the "Carolina Gardens" section of www.carolinacountry.com

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Santa Claus Cookies

- 2 packages (6 ounces each) white baking chocolate, chopped
- 1 package (1 pound) Nutter Butter sandwich cookies
- Red colored sugar
- 32 vanilla or white chips
- 64 miniature semisweet chocolate chips
- 32 red-hot candies

In a heavy saucepan over low heat, melt white chocolate, stirring occasionally. Dip one end of each cookie into melted chocolate. Place on wire racks. For Santa's hat, sprinkle red sugar on top part of chocolate. Press one vanilla chip off-center on hat for pom-pom; let stand until set.

Dip other end of each cookie into melted chocolate for beard, leaving center of cookie uncovered. Place on wire racks. With a dab of melted chocolate, attach semi-sweet chips for eyes and a red-hot for nose. Place on waxed paper until chocolate sets.

Yield: 32 cookies



Bacon Biscuit Wreath

- 1 jar (5 ounces) sharp American cheese spread
- 3 tablespoons butter-flavored shortening
- 1 tube (12 ounces) flaky biscuits
- 4 bacon strips, cooked and crumbled
- 2 tablespoons minced fresh parsley

In a small saucepan, melt the cheese spread and shortening; stir until blended. Pour into a well-greased 6-cup ovenproof ring mold or 9-inch fluted tube pan. Cut each biscuit into quarters and place over cheese mixture. Bake at 400 degrees for 12-14 minutes or until golden brown.

Immediately invert pan onto a serving platter and remove. Sprinkle with bacon and parsley. Serve warm.

Yield: 10 servings.



Caramel Heavenlies

- 12 graham crackers (4 3/4 x 2 1/2 inches)
- 2 cups miniature marshmallows
- 3/4 cup butter or margarine
- 3/4 cup packed brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 cup sliced almonds
- 1 cup flaked coconut

Line a 15-by-10-by-1-inch baking pan with foil. Place graham crackers in pan; cover with marshmallows. In a saucepan over medium heat, cook and stir butter, brown sugar and cinnamon until the butter is melted and sugar is dissolved. Remove from heat; stir in vanilla. Spoon over the marshmallows. Sprinkle with almonds and coconut. Bake at 350 degrees for 14-16 minutes or until browned. Cool completely. Cut into 2-inch squares, then cut each square in half to form triangles.

Yield: about 6 dozen.



Reindeer Snack Mix

- 2 cups Bugles
- 2 cups cheese-flavored snack crackers
- 2 cups pretzel sticks
- 1 cup Corn Chex
- 1 cup bite-size Shredded Wheat
- 1 cup pecan halves
- 1/2 cup butter or margarine, melted
- 1 tablespoon maple syrup
- 1 1/2 teaspoons Worcestershire sauce
- 3/4 teaspoon Cajun seasoning
- 1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper

In a large bowl, combine the first six ingredients. In another bowl, combine butter, syrup, Worcestershire sauce, Cajun seasoning and cayenne; pour over cereal mixture and toss to coat.

Transfer to an ungreased 15-by-10-by-1-inch baking pan. Bake uncovered at 250 degrees for 1 hour. Stir every 15 minutes.

Yield: about 9 cups.

Peanut Butter Fudge

- 1 pound white confectionery coating*, cut into pieces
- 1 cup creamy peanut butter
- 1 cup coarsely chopped walnuts

Melt coating in a saucepan over medium-low heat, stirring constantly until smooth. Remove from the heat; stir in peanut butter and walnuts. Spread into a greased 8-inch pan. Chill until firm. Cut into squares.

Yield: 1 3/4 pounds.

*Found in the baking section of most grocery stores, some times labeled as "almond bark," or "candy coating."



Recipes are by Taste of Home magazine. For a sample copy, send \$2 to Taste of Home, Suite 4321, PO Box 990, Greendale WI 53129-0990. Visit the Web page at www.tasteofhome.com.

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